



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SENATOR ROUNDS MEETS WITH DR. DAVID SHULKIN

South Dakota U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, made the following statement after his meeting with Dr. David Shulkin, whom President Trump has nominated to be Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"I thank Dr. Shulkin for meeting with me to discuss our shared goals of fixing the systemic problems facing the VA and making our veterans the top priority," said Rounds.

"During our meeting, we discussed the future of the VA health care facility in Hot Springs and the Choice Program, which is set to expire in August 2017. Additionally, I urged the VA, under his leadership, to comply with the Emergency Care Fairness Act (ECFA) based on the clear intent expressed by Congress and the court system. Since the ECFA was enacted in 2010, the VA has failed in its legal obligation to cover the emergency room bills of hundreds of thousands of veterans."

"It's clear that Dr. Shulkin understands the problems within the VA and truly cares about our nation's veterans. I look forward to working closely with him to improve the lives of all veterans, should he be confirmed." Dr. Shulkin's confirmation hearing has not yet been scheduled.



Inside this issue:

USD to Honor Clay County Fallen Heroes	2
Potter County Names New VSO	2
State Veterans Home Update	3
155th Recognized for Outstanding Family Programs	4
Upcoming Events	5

CLAY COUNTY'S FALLEN HEROES TO BE HONORED BY USD STUDENTS



Clay County VSO Cynthia Aden had the opportunity to address one of the University of South Dakota School of Education classes.

Professor Williams' class, Secondary Social Science Methods are focusing on "Wars From a Human Perspective".

The forum was designed for students to ask questions of military veterans and learn more about what experiences they had during war time in particular.

Aden was joined by County Sheriff Andy Howe, seated next to her, along with three other veterans.

These students will be part of the research project called Clay County's Fallen. This is sponsored by the Vermillion VFW Post 3061.

Aden continues to have an active role with the USD Veterans and the professors on campus.

POTTER COUNTY NAMES NEW VSO

The Potter County Commission has named Donald Hericks as their new County Veterans Service Officer.

Hericks replaces Harlan Shaw. Hericks will have the Potter County VSO office open from nine to five on Mondays of each week.

Please join SDDVA in welcoming Hericks to the veteran network. Hericks, an Army Veteran, served from 1963-1965.



ACTIVITIES GALORE AT THE STATE VETERANS HOME

Social, recreational, cultural and entertainment activities are an important part of life for everyone, including our heroes at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

Our activity coordinator assesses each resident's needs, interests and abilities and helps the resident participate in appropriate activities.

Structured and unstructured activities are offered to promote the residents' general health, physical, social and mental well-being.

Activities are not just about bingo and watching television. In fact, activity programs can be quite creative and stimulating for the mind. And the health and well-being benefits of a good program are becoming more and more documented. In short, this stuff works. Activities are an integral part of the cultural change movement and central to person-centered care and we are fortunate to have a great team working with our heroes at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs.



DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING FAMILY PROGRAMS

Mr. Matthew Dubois, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Integration, will host the 2016 Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Awards presentation at 10 a.m., Friday, March 24, at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes.

The award recognizes the National Guard and Reserve units, one from each of the seven Reserve Components, with the very best programs to support their military families. Representatives from each of the winning units will be in attendance and receive a commemorative plaque and framed certificate from Mr. Dubois. Each unit will also receive a certificate of recognition and award from the Military Officers Association of America.

This year's winners are:

- * Army National Guard - 155th Engineer Company (Vertical), Rapid City and Wagner, South Dakota Unit Commander: Capt. David Dodson
- * Army Reserve - 461st Engineer Company, Fargo, North Dakota Unit Commander: Capt. Richard Osterberg
- * Marine Corps Reserve - Marine Air Control Group 48, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Great Lakes, Illinois Unit Commander: Col. Paul Weaver
- * Navy Reserve - Navy Operational Support Center San Jose, San Jose, California Unit Commander: Cmdr. Amy Hunt
- * Air National Guard - 123rd Airlift Wing, Louisville, Kentucky Unit Commander: Col. David Mounkes
- * Air Force Reserve - 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana Unit Commander: Col. Lorenza Shaw
- * Coast Guard Reserve - Port Security Unit 307, Clearwater, Florida Unit Commander: Cmdr. Eric Bernstein

The Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Awards program was established in 2000 to recognize the top unit in each of the Reserve Components. Family readiness programs are a vital link in the support networks for Reserve Component families and are particularly important as our Nation relies on National Guard and Reserve members to support and serve in critical missions worldwide. Family readiness has proven to be a key component of mission readiness, and robust family readiness programs enhance the ability to sustain and deploy National Guard and Reserve units.



Upcoming Events

2017

Jan. 30—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre

Feb. 1—Veterans Town Hall—DAV Chapter 1 (1519 W. 51st Street) - Sioux Falls 5:00 pm (CT)

Feb. 1—American Legion Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8 Cabin—Pierre (520 S. Pierre Street) - 5:30 pm (CT)

Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)

Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma

March 1—SFVAHCS Creative Arts Festival—Sioux Falls VA Medical Center 2:00 pm (CT)

April 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)

Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown

Jun 22-25—State VFW Convention—Pierre

Aug. 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota

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